



U.S. Department of Justice

Ronald C. Machen Jr.
*United States Attorney for the
District of Columbia*

*Judiciary Center
555 Fourth Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20530*

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For Information Contact:

Public Affairs

(202) 514-6933

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FARC Logistical Network Commander Sentenced to 138 months for Providing Material Support to the FARC

Washington, D.C. - A former high-ranking FARC 1st Front member and logistical network commander, Nancy Conde Rubio, who had pleaded guilty to providing material support to the FARC on March 17, 2010, was sentenced today to 138 months incarceration by the Honorable Royce C. Lamberth, Chief Judge of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, announced David S. Kris, Assistant Attorney General for the National Security Division, Ronald C. Machen Jr., U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, Michael Folmar, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI") Miami Field Office, Anthony V. Mangione, Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE") Miami Field Office, and Chris K. Amato, Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Defense, Defense Criminal Investigative Service ("DCIS") Southeast Field Office. Rubio, a 37-year-old Colombian national, was extradited from the Republic of Colombia in September 2009.

Rubio was sentenced for the crime of conspiracy to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (in Spanish, the "Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia," commonly known as the "FARC"). FARC members obtained cash and weapons from drug dealers in exchange for FARC controlled cocaine, and then transferred funds to FARC collaborators who were members of the conspiracy so that they could purchase the materials and supplies needed to operate the 1st Front. Materials and supplies were transported to the FARC in airplanes via clandestine airstrips located in Colombia and elsewhere, in trucks, and in river boats navigating remote jungle rivers that traverse rural areas of Colombia and neighboring countries.

According to evidence introduced during the plea and sentencing hearings, Conde Rubio was the leader of the 1st Front's logistical supply and communications network. To supply itself, the FARC's 1st Front relied on a network of individuals with access to Colombia's metropolitan and commercial centers, as well as to product markets in other countries. It also relied on individuals involved in the trafficking of narcotics, who had access to weapons, foreign currency,

and other supplies, such as high technology communications equipment. The 1st Front commander and Conde Rubio directed other members of the logistical support network to obtain and transport materials and supplies. One primary method of communication used to operate the network was by satellite telephones obtained by Conde Rubio from the United States. Radio call centers also were used to patch through high frequency radio calls from FARC leaders operating in the jungle to co-conspirators using conventional telephones in urban areas, who were responsible for obtaining materials and supplies for the FARC guerillas. Because neither land line nor cell phone service was available in the jungle areas controlled by the 1st Front, satellite telephones and high frequency radios were the only methods of electronic communication available. The 1st Front's communications network was dismantled when Rubio and other members of the logistical and material supply network charged in the Government's 2007 Indictment were arrested in January and February 2008.

The FARC held three Americans hostage from February 13, 2003, until they were rescued in a dramatic Colombian military operation on July 2, 2008. Beginning in September 2006, the three Americans were held hostage by the FARC's 1st Front. As alleged in the Indictment, the logistical supply and communications network established by Conde Rubio was used by other FARC leaders to maintain control of and to transport the American hostages while they were being held in captivity by the 1st Front. Because the Colombian law enforcement and military rescue operation was based on a ruse – convincing 1st Front leaders that they had been ordered to release the hostages to a humanitarian group – it was imperative that the 1st Front leaders not be able to utilize their communications network to verify that these orders were indeed issued by the FARC high command, rather than through the Colombian government's military operation. After Conde Rubio's arrest became known, the 1st Front leaders no longer had a reliable communications network with which to communicate with other FARC fronts and blocs, or their executive leadership and high command.

Other alleged 1st Front leaders were charged in the Indictment with hostage taking and related offenses, while other alleged members of the network – including narcotics traffickers and weapons dealers – were charged with providing material support or resources to the FARC.

In announcing today's sentence, Assistant Attorney General Kris, U.S. Attorney Machen, FBI Special Agent in Charge Folmar, ICE Special Agent in Charge Mangione, and DCIS Special Agent in Charge Amato acknowledged the outstanding work of Colombian law enforcement and prosecution authorities, who worked cooperatively with the FBI, ICE and DCIS on this investigation. They also thanked Department of Justice National Security Division Trial Attorneys David P. Cora (Counterterrorism Section) and David Mudd (Office of Intelligence), and Assistant U.S. Attorneys Anthony Asuncion, Lynn E. Haaland, and M. Jeffrey Beatrice, who are prosecuting the case.

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